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MN014101. Cowan, Weldon Laud Navy Medicine Personnel

By JO3 Jodi M. Durie, Naval Medical Center Portsmouth

Portsmouth, Va. - During a recent visit to Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, Surgeon General VADM Michael L. Cowan, MC, and Navy Medicine Force Master Chief HMCM Mark Weldon applauded the men and women of Navy medicine for their role during and after the attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center.

"There has never been a time in my 30-plus years in the Navy where I have been prouder of Navy Medicine," said Cowan. "I am honored to be your Surgeon General - that honor became excruciatingly acute on September 11 as I looked out the window of my office and watched the Pentagon burn. That's something you don't see everyday - an attack on our homeland," Cowan said, with great emotion.

He proudly recounted the courageous acts of Navy medical staff who risked their lives to save the lives of those in the Pentagon.

"And I tell you what Navy Medicine did when people were streaming out of the Pentagon: We had Navy (healthcare) providers and Navy corpsmen who were going the other way (heading into the Pentagon)."

Cowan continued, "When asked by the media why they entered this scorching, flaming building, as that's really not the best place in the world to be, one of them said, 'I knew where my duty station was.'"

Cowan and Weldon also recognized the efforts of the staff on USNS Comfort (T-AH 20).

"The staff of USNS Comfort delivered support to the firefighters who were risking their lives 18 to 20 hours a day. We became a force multiplier for the city of New York," explained Cowan. "The firefighters were fed, showered, bedded, fed again and handed back their clothes clean. The Navy was a remarkable success story," added Cowan.

Weldon also had great things to say about enlisted medical personnel.

"The best Sailors in the nation are in Navy Medicine - that includes all ratings," said Weldon. "In every event, certainly in the 30 years I have

been in the Navy, where Navy Medicine has responded, whatever the occasion, Navy Medicine responds magnificently.

"That's the legacy of the hospital corps. That's why they name ships after hospital corpsman," said Weldon.

Portsmouth staff asked Cowan and Weldon about training, readiness, current status and plans about anthrax vaccination, and advancement opportunities. Cowan brought up the questions he's been asked most since Sept. 11.

"People ask me two questions now," said Cowan. "First, 'where will this go from here?' I don't know - we're at war and I think this will certainly be going on after I'm gone from the service, and it may be going on after all of you are out of the service. We don't know how big this will be.

"Then they ask, 'what do I do now?'

"What you do is what you did yesterday, and what you did September 10. Take care of your patients and have your personal readiness up to speed, so whenever you are called upon, you can perform like our brothers and sisters did," Cowan said.

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MN014102. Navy Researchers Closing In On Dengue Fever Vaccine

By Doris Ryan, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery

Silver Spring, Md. - Marines are among the toughest warriors in the world, but one bite from a dengue-infected mosquito can send them to the hospital for a week with high fever, rash, severe headache and incapacitating muscle and joint pain. It can be another four weeks before they're fit for duty.

During World War II, dengue fever was a major cause of incapacitating troops in the Western Pacific. It also reduced readiness among troops in Vietnam, Somalia and Haiti.

The only treatment is to relieve the symptoms - bed-rest, lots of fluids, pain-killers, and hospitalization, if necessary. Careful treatment can prevent fatalities, but recovery can be long and arduous.

The good news is that once you've had dengue fever from one of the four virus strains that cause it, you have lifetime immunity from that strain. The bad news is, if you get a second infection from one of the other strains, it's likely that you'll contract a severe form of disease, dengue hemorrhagic fever (DHF).

For decades, researchers have been attempting to unravel the mystery of this puzzling incapacitating disease so a cure could be found. Now, thanks to Dr. Shuenn-Jue Wu, Ph.D., and her research team at the Naval Medical Research Center in Silver Spring, there may be an answer soon.

Wu and her team are focusing on the body's dendritic cells, a type of immune cell.

"We were the first research team to study and prove that dendritic cells could be infected with the four types of dengue virus," said Wu. "This research opens new windows of opportunity. We are excited about our potential to progress in developing an effective dengue vaccine."

Wu's team has been growing human dendritic cells in the laboratory to study the body's immune mechanisms for fighting infection and to search for clues to solve the mystery related to the severity of a second dengue infection. Understanding that may be a major step to developing an effective vaccine.

Wu's research was the cover story last summer in the prestigious Nature Medicine Journal. She received the 2001 Association of Military Surgeons of the U.S. Sir Henry Wellcome medal and prize in recognition of her groundbreaking research.

Dengue fever and DHF is globally recognized as a re-emerging infectious disease. Epidemics have been reported in the Americas, southern Europe, North Africa, the eastern Mediterranean, Asia and Australia, and on various islands in the Indian Ocean, the south and central Pacific and the Caribbean.

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MN014103. Fellowes Honored as Chief Petty Officer
By LT Rene Pachuta, MSC, and HMCM(SW/FMF) Brian Pamuro, Naval School of Health Science Bethesda

Bethesda, Md. - Retired CAPT Jack Fellowes was made an Honorary Chief Petty Officer of the Navy by the Master Chief of the Navy to honor him for his work in teaching chief petty officers how to survive the adversity of being prisoners of war.

Fellowes has volunteered as a guest lecturer at the Naval School of Health Sciences Bethesda for more than 20 years, providing personal insight into the duress of captivity and survival tactics. He was shot down over Vietnam in 1966 while on a bombing mission and remained a prisoner for more than six and a half years.

A resident of Annapolis, Md., Fellowes travels to either Bethesda or Rockville 23 times a year to lecture students in NSHS Bethesda's Health Resources Management and Management Development courses. Over the years, Fellowes has taught more than 6,400 Chief Petty Officers assigned to Navy Medicine activities.

"We wanted to honor him, to let him know how much we appreciate what he's taught the chiefs who have passed through this course," said HMCM (SW/FMF) Brian Pamuro, director of NSHS Bethesda's health resources management course. "We thought the best way to do that is to make him one of us."

The school's CPO Mess nominated Fellowes to Master Chief of the Navy MMCM(SS/SW/AW) James Herdt, who approved the request.

Fellowes also lectures to junior and mid-grade officers in management courses at NSHS Bethesda.

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MN014104. Pentagon Terrorist Attack: Were You There?

In the wake of the recent terrorist attack on the Pentagon, the Office of the Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs has tasked the Army's North Atlantic Regional Medical Command, Aberdeen, Md., to conduct a post-disaster health assessment survey of individuals who were at the Pentagon during the Sept. 11 attack.

The purpose of the survey is two-fold: To ensure those who experienced the attack are getting the support and assistance they need, and to gather information that might help save lives and prevent injuries in the future.

A multi-service team is going door-to-door in the Pentagon to encourage individuals to take the survey, but since hundreds of people who were at the Pentagon on Sept. 11 have been displaced or have relocated, NARMD also prepared an Internet accessible version of the survey. The survey takes about 15 minutes to complete and is located at medreg.apgea.army.mil/survey.

To ensure privacy, all information sent via Internet is encrypted. For additional information about accessing the website call 410 436-3861 or DSN 584-3861.

A paper copy of the survey is available for individuals who don't have Internet access. Call 703 692-8861 within the next 30 days to have one sent to you.

All information will be kept confidential. Data collected via Internet or paper will be maintained in a secure area at the Army's Center for Health

Promotion and Preventive Medicine (CHPPM). A notice will be put in each individual's health record to alert medical personnel that the survey has been completed. Answers will not be in individual health records, and are only available to healthcare provider with each patient's permission.

For questions or comments on the survey, visit
chppm-www.apgea.army.mil <<http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil>> or e-mail at:
PPDHA@apg.amedd.army.mil.

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MN014105. Guantanamo Bay Embraces Teleradiology

HM2 Michael Latimer, US Naval Hospital Guantanamo Bay, Cuba

Guantanamo Bay, Cuba - When U.S. Naval Hospital Guantanamo Bay's only radiologist left for San Diego, there was little concern about his departure. That's because technology known as Computerized Radiography System and Picture Archiving and Communications System (PACS) can transmit radiographs electronically to state-side Navy hospitals for experienced radiologists to read.

The radiographs - more commonly called x-rays - are taken in the same cold room and hard table as the old method, but the technologist uses a cassette that contains a phosphor plate that captures the x-ray image. Then the image is digitized by a computer and transferred to a computer workstation. From there, the image is transmitted to state-side to Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, Va. or other Navy treatment facilities, or within NH Guantanamo Bay to a workstation in the radiology department, orthopedics/general surgery department or healthcare provider's desktop computer.

Besides being able to send x-rays almost instantaneously to almost any Navy medical facility in the world, there are other advantages. There are no more lost x-rays, radiation exposure is decreased, and since computers are used to develop the image rather than a darkroom full of hazardous chemicals, it's environmentally friendly.

The technology is also being used at other military treatment facilities, including NMC Portsmouth, NMC San Diego, Branch Medical Clinic Key West, the Pentagon and several Army and Air Force medical facilities.

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MN014106. USNS Mercy Gets Ready

By JO1 Sonya Ansarov, Naval Medical Center San Diego

"This is a drill, this is a drill," echoed throughout USNS Mercy (T-AH 19) recently while the crew trained for what might not be a drill next time.

The weeklong training evolution started off with Mercy's military treatment facility's new commanding officer addressing his staff.

"The heinous attack on our country on 11 September has elevated the Mercy mission to the highest level of readiness . . . a 'frame shift' in our thought process from a peacetime mission to a 'wartime scenario' is necessary. By the end of this week, all of you must have made this transition," said CAPT J. D. Malone, MC.

To help get the crew to make this 'frame shift', Mercy held a mass casualty drill. The flight deck held flight quarters simulating casualties being brought to Mercy by helicopters. Doctors, nurses and corpsman were standing ready.

"This is great training and I think it puts things into perspective. It makes you realize this is what we are here for," said HN Naomi Ovalle who worked in casualty receiving.

One of the ways the Mercy crew makes sure patients are in good hands is by cross training.

"We've trained some of the nurses to do the doctor's job in

resuscitation, so if we get really stretched, they (nurses) are capable of taking care of the patient without a doctor for a period of time," said CDR Michael Hoffer, MC, chief of otolaryngology on Mercy.

The nurses are thankful they have this extra training.

"Cross training is vital. You never know when a doctor may not be able to respond. It is very important that everyone know how to do different jobs for the patient's sake," said ENS Accursia Baldassano, NC.

According to LCDR Patricia Corley, NC, Mercy's training officer, the training exercise was a success.

"Over 75 casualties were triaged and treated during the exercise, which included those generated during a shipboard damage control exercise," she said. "This exercise reflected our ability to receive and treat casualties as well as the ability of the staff to maintain the integrity of the ship."

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MN014107. HM Awarded Volunteer Medal for Girl Scout Work

By JO2 Ellen Maurer, National Naval Medical Center Bethesda

Bethesda, Md. - HM2 John Ford of National Naval Medical Center Bethesda was recently decorated with the Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal during a short ceremony at the hospital.

The award was in recognition of his efforts to promote youth education and citizenship through five years of volunteer work with Girl Scouts in America and overseas.

Marsha Johnson Evans, national executive director of Girl Scouts of the USA and a retired Navy Rear Admiral, presented the medal.

Ford, who participated in the Girl Scouts while being stationed in Texas, Italy and Bethesda, was most recently a troop leader in the Fort George G. Meade Service Unit.

He said that the biggest reward for his time spent with the scouts was not the medal, but rather the quality time spent with his daughter.

"I think that the great thing about the Girl Scouts is it encourages all of these young women to make their own decisions. And as a troop leader, I've been able to watch my daughter go through all this and grow up in a lot of ways. As a father, I feel lucky and grateful to be such a big part in that."

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MN014108. Snapshot of Navy Medicine

- Hospitals: 25
- Medical Clinics: 135
- Fleet Hospitals: 10
- Hospital Ships: 2
- Dental centers and clinics: 131
- Medical Corps: 4,100 active duty 1,010 Reservists
- Nurse Corps: 3,140 active duty 1,800 Reservists
- Dental Corps: 1,310 active duty 370 Reservists
- Hospital Corpsmen: 21,700 active duty 5,285 Reservists
- Dental Technicians: 3,325 active duty 575 Reservists
- Medical Service Corps: 2,650 active duty 625 Reservists
- Marine Corps & Navy beneficiaries: 2.6 million
- Health care visits annually: 10.5 million
- Corpsmen who have received Medal of Honor: 22

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MN014109. HealthWatch: What You Should Know About Anthrax

By Jan Davis, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery

Before running for rubber gloves, gas masks and Cipro, learn the facts

about anthrax, the new terrorist threat that is on everyone's lips.

The truth is, anthrax is nothing new - it's been around for centuries in cattle, sheep, goats, camels and other hoofed animals. These animals are the most common victims, but it can also be transmitted to people who have been exposed to the infected animal or to infected animal tissue. Farmers, ranchers and rural veterinarians were the most at-risk individuals, which is why they were often vaccinated against the disease.

Anthrax is an acute infectious disease caused by the bacterium *Bacillus anthracis*. Symptoms of disease vary depending on how the disease is contracted, but usually occur within seven days after exposure. The most serious form of human anthrax is inhalation anthrax. Other forms include intestinal anthrax and cutaneous anthrax.

The initial symptoms of inhalation anthrax infection may resemble a common cold. After several days, the symptoms may progress to severe breathing problems and shock. Inhalation anthrax can be fatal if not treated early.

The intestinal form of anthrax may follow the consumption of contaminated food and is characterized by severe inflammation of the intestines. The initial symptoms include nausea, loss of appetite, vomiting, and fever are followed by abdominal pain, vomiting of blood, and severe diarrhea. Like inhalation anthrax, it can be fatal if not treated early.

The most common form of the disease is cutaneous anthrax. About 95 percent of all human anthrax infections occur when the bacterium enters a cut or abrasion on the skin. It begins as a raised itchy bump, but soon turns into a painless ulcer, usually with a black center. There may be some swelling around the ulcer. It is serious, but rarely fatal if treated.

"As serious as inhalation anthrax is, or any form of the disease, you can't catch it from other people," said CDR Harry Taylor, MC, co-chair of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery's Homeland Defense Task Force and a family physician.

Anthrax bacterium form spores that can lie dormant for decades in soil, water or other surfaces. These resting spores activate when they find a suitable environment, such as lungs or broken skin. The disease can only be contracted when spores enter the body. Dry spores were mailed to NBC's Tom Brokaw and Senate Minority Leader Thomas Daschle's offices.

Anthrax exposure and infection is treated with antibiotics. Early treatment is essential. Delaying allows bacterium to release more toxins, and lessens chances for survival if you have inhalation form of the disease. According to Taylor, the most commonly prescribed antibiotic for anthrax is fluoroquinolones, which is commonly called Cipro. But Taylor cautioned that Cipro or other antibiotics shouldn't be taken unless your healthcare provider has determined that you've been exposed to or have an active case of anthrax. In the absence of any evidence of anthrax, antibiotics have no benefit against the disease, and, in fact, may cause problems.

"Inappropriate use of antibiotics will lead to increased antibiotic resistance," said Taylor. "Also, Cipro should only be taken under a clinician's care. They can have side effects, such as colitis, allergic reactions or an interaction with other medications you might be taking."

When taking any prescription drugs, always consult your healthcare provider.

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MN014110. What to Watch for In Your Letter Mail

Security experts provide the following list of things to look for when handling mail:

- Excessive postage

- Handwritten or poorly typed addresses
- Incorrect titles
- Title, but no name
- Misspellings of common words
- Oily stains, discoloration, or odors
- No return address
- Excessive weight
- Lopsided or uneven envelope
- Excessive sealing material such as masking tape or string
- Marked with restrictive words such as "Personal" or "Confidential"
- City or state in the postmark that doesn't match the return address

If you should receive a suspicious letter, take the following actions:

- Don't shake, open or handle the mail item or package
- Don't try to clean up powders or fluids
- Place the envelope or package in a plastic bag or container to isolate it and prevent contents leakage
- If you don't have a container, cover mail with clothing, paper, trash can, or other item and don't remove it
- Leave the room, close the door, and secure the area to prevent others from entering
- Wash hands with soap and water to prevent spreading the substance to face or skin; ensure everyone else who touched the item wash as well

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MN014111. Sea World, Others Honor "America's Heroes" With Free Admission

Sea World and other Anheuser-Busch theme parks are opening their doors to "America's Heroes," offering free admission to law enforcement officers, firefighters, emergency medical workers, and members of the Armed Forces (Active Duty, Reserve, and National Guard.) The free admission will also be extended to members of their immediate families.

Parks offering free admission every day through 2001 are:

- Sea World-Orlando
- Sea World-San Diego
- Busch Gardens-Tampa

Parks offering free admission weekends through the end of their seasons are:

- Sea World-San Antonio
- Busch Gardens-Williamsburg
- Sesame Place
- Adventure Island

Anheuser-Busch's Water Country are not offering free admission.

Military members must present a current ID. On their first visit, members will receive a customized Passport valid for FREE unlimited admission every day through December 2001.

Visit www.anheuser-busch.com/news/heroes.html for more information.

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MN014112. Cyberspace Sites of Interest

Since Sept. 11, Americans have never been so aware of the importance of being and getting ready. Below are Websites that may be helpful in emergency planning and for anthrax and postal safety information:

Red Cross: "Terrorism: Plan for the Unexpected": Provides guidance for you and your family in developing an emergency action plan.

www.redcross.org/services/disaster/keepsafe/unexpected.html

Department of Defense's Anthrax Vaccination Immunization Program:

www.anthrax.osd.mil/. Provides information on the anthrax disease, threat and vaccine.

The U.S. Postal Service: "What To Do If You Receive an Anthrax Threat":
www.usps.com/. Provide information on coping with a suspicious letter or
package.

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